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ABSTRACT

A practicum addressed the high percentage of students who were experiencing difficulty with reading comprehension and vocabulary retention in a fifth-grade Drop Out Prevention class by implementing a supplemental whole-language program. Subjects were 19 fifth-grade students. An informal reading inventory, an attitude survey, and academic grades were used as pretest measurements. The students were instructed in reading through the use of a 13-week whole language program. In addition to any supplemental reading done by the students, each week the students were required to read five short stories or one book. The weekly whole-language activities were centered around the reading done by students. Students worked on whole-language activities for at least one hour per day. Results indicated that there was an increase in reading comprehension, vocabulary retention and attitudes towards reading and academic grades. It was concluded that the use of whole-language instruction was effective in increasing reading comprehension and vocabulary retention skills. (Twenty references are attached. Appendixes include pretest, posttests, student data and an implementation timeline.) (Author/MG)

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INCREASING READING COMPREHENSION AND VOCABULARY RETENTION SKILLS
BY USING THE WHOLE-LANGUAGE APPROACH

by

MARY I. STASKO

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A Practicum Report

submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of
Education at Nova University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database
System for reference.

February/1991

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Retention Skills By Using the Whole-Language Approach.

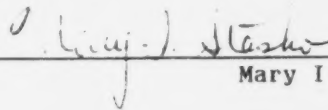
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The high percentage of students who were experiencing difficulty with reading comprehension and vocabulary retention in a fifth-grade Drop Out Prevention class was addressed by the implementation of a supplemental whole-language reading program. An informal reading inventory (Burns & Rowe, 1989) and an attitude survey (McKenna, 1990) as well as academic grades were used as pretest measurements. The students were instructed in reading through the use of a 13-week whole-language program. The results showed that there was an increase in reading comprehension, vocabulary retention and attitudes towards reading and academic grades. It was concluded that the use of whole-language instruction is effective in increasing reading comprehension and vocabulary retention skills. Appendices include pretest, posttests, student data, and an implementation timeline.

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.



Mary I. Stasko

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

The school that served as a setting for this practicum was a public elementary school that is located in the southeast section of the United States. It provided services for students from four-year-old pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. The surrounding community was multi-cultural in the low- to middle-class bracket. A significant percentage of these families have been affected by divorce and separation. The school offered a variety of programs to meet the needs of the student population: Chapter One, Drop-Out Prevention, SLD (Specific Learning Disability), and Speech. The school also served as a gifted center for students from several other schools.

The physical plant was in excellent shape. The building was new and the grounds were beautifully landscaped. There were many portable classrooms housed in the back of the school grounds which were brought in to meet the rapidly increasing student population.

It was a modern building located on 20 acres of land. One section of the school housed the intermediate grades and another section, the primary grades. The portables were used as primary and intermediate grades. A third section housed the ESE (Exceptional Student Education) programs. The fine arts programs and the

cafeteria were located in a fourth section of the school and the main office was in a separate section. All of the sections surround an open-air courtyard. There was also a large physical education area located on the east section of the school grounds.

All of the classrooms were fully carpeted and had individual desks. The pre-kindergarten room was equipped with a shower, sink, and dressing area. The kindergarten rooms provided a fully-equipped kitchen and bathroom facilities. The primary rooms were equipped with bathroom facilities. All classrooms had a back door leading to the outside of the building.

The cafeteria prepared lunch for all students from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. Students who had been approved by the federally-funded free lunch program were also served breakfast.

The school offered a before-school and after-school day care program to meet the needs of working parents. There was a charge for this program.

The school personnel consisted of a principal, two assistant principals, a secretary, a data processor, and two receptionists. There were 49 full-time elementary teachers, eight full-time teachers in the fine arts department, 11 full-time teachers in the ESE department, two resource teachers, and one media specialist. There were also two permanent substitutes, 20 part-time teaching assistants, six full-time custodians, and six cafeteria workers.

The total number of enrollment was 1,213. The ethnic breakdown was 69 percent White, 21 percent Black, and 10 percent other.

The author of this proposal was an elementary school instructor. For the purpose of this practicum, the author acted as an administrator to monitor the teachers' implementations of this plan.

In this practicum, the target group was the class the practicum author used for implementation of the program. This was a group of fifth grade Drop-Out Prevention students. There were 19 students in the class: 57 percent boys and 43 percent girls. The students ranged in age from 11 years, five months, to 12 years, six months, with a mean of 11 years, eight months.

The students in the 1990-91 fifth grade Drop-Out Prevention class were experiencing problems in reading as evidenced by the Burns and Rowe Informal Reading Inventory Pretest (Appendix A:30) administered by the practicum author and by results from the McKenna Elementary Reading Attitude Pretest (Appendix B:34), also administered by the practicum author. The practicum author received permission from both publishing companies to administer these tests for the purposes of this practicum (Appendix C:38). The reading problems were also evidenced by the students' 1989-90 academic grades.

Two main areas in which these students were having difficulty were reading comprehension and vocabulary retention. Many of these

students began having difficulty early in their school careers and have continued to experience the same problems throughout their elementary years.

After interviewing the teacher of these students, the teacher confirmed that the students were having difficulty in reading. The teacher agreed that the main areas of difficulty were in reading comprehension and vocabulary retention. The teacher stated that the students' low grades in reading often promoted negative attitudes and low interest levels towards reading and towards school (Appendix D:41).

The practicum author and the classroom teacher discussed possible solutions to their problem. Through brainstorming, the idea of implementing a whole-language instructional program into the classroom emerged. It is believed by the practicum author and the teacher that a program that is less rigid and one that values ambiguities, such as a whole-language program, would definitely make a positive impact on the education of the students.

It is the writer's belief that because many of these students are culturally deprived and from low economic backgrounds, that they are academically disadvantaged. Many of them have not been given the attention at home by nurturing parents. Many are from working single parent families with many younger siblings at home to care for. Because these students were below average when beginning

school in kindergarten, they have experienced failure and continued to fall behind the average student.

For the purpose of this practicum, the author will refer to a comparison group of students. This group of students was a comparable student population (similarities in age, race, and sex ratios). This group was referred to solely for the purpose of determining the needs assessment for the target group.

In the target group, 20 percent of the fifth grade students scored satisfactorily (70 percent or above) in reading comprehension and vocabulary retention on the Burns and Rowe Informal Reading Inventory Pretest (Appendix E:43). The scores ranged from 10 percent to 75 percent with a mean of 30 percent. In the comparison group, 80 percent of the students scored satisfactorily (70 percent or above) on the Burns and Rowe Informal Reading Inventory (Appendix E:43). The scores ranged from 50 percent to 100 percent with a mean of 85 percent. There was a need for an additional 60 percent of the students in the target group to score 70 percent or above on the Burns and Rowe Informal Reading Inventory.

In the target group only 15 percent of the students reported positive (70 percent or above) attitudes towards reading as shown by the McKenna Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix F:45). The scores ranged from zero percent to 70 percent with a mean of 30 percent. In the comparison group, 90 percent of the students

expressed positive attitudes (70 percent or above) towards reading (Appendix F:45). The scores ranged from 40 percent to 100 percent with a mean of 90 percent. In the target group there was a need to improve 75 percent of the students' attitudes to that of a positive attitude (70 percent or above) towards reading.

In the target group 20 percent of the fifth grade students scored satisfactorily (70 percent or above) on academic grades for the 1989-90 school year (Appendix G:47). The grades ranged from 30 percent to 70 percent with a mean of 50 percent. In the comparison group, 80 percent of the fifth grade students scored satisfactorily (70 percent or above) on the academic grades for the 1989-90 school year (Appendix G:47). The scores ranged from 10 percent to 100 percent with a mean of 80 percent. There was a need for an additional 60 percent of the students in the target group to score satisfactorily (70 percent or above) on academic grades in reading.

Due to this stated evidence that a problem existed, the practicum author found it necessary to design three outcome objectives.

The outcome objectives were designed to increase reading comprehension and vocabulary retention. They are as follows: After 13 weeks of implementation in a specialized reading program, 60 percent of the target group of fifth grade Drop-Out Prevention students will improve their scores as measured by the Burns and Rowe

Informal Reading Inventory Posttest (Appendix H:49) by 40 percent over pre-intervention scores through the use of whole language.

After 13 weeks of implementation in a specialized reading program, 75 percent of the target group of fifth grade Drop-Out Prevention students will improve their attitudes towards reading by 40 percent over pre-intervention scores as shown by the McKenna Elementary Reading Attitude Survey through the use of whole language.

After 13 weeks of implementation in a specialized reading program, 60 percent of the target group of fifth grade Drop-Out Prevention students will improve their scores by 20 percent over pre-intervention scores as evidenced by a series of four teacher-made reading comprehension and vocabulary retention tests. These tests included critical thinking skills and were designed specifically for this practicum project (Appendix I:53).

The practicum author chose these objectives because they were easy to apply and the necessary resources were readily available. The practicum author also had full support of the school administrators and the other teachers who were involved in the practicum implementation.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

The research that has been completed by the writer served many purposes. It not only provided new insight and new strategies but also served to reinforce the writer's views on the need to adopt some of the current trends in reading. It confirmed the writer's belief that the use of the whole-language approach in teaching reading must be adapted into the county reading curriculum. This research included reading professional journals and books and discussions with professionals in the area of reading.

The whole-language approach is a philosophy that uses various techniques to teach students to read. It offers a print-rich environment in which children use reading in a meaningful manner. Whole language focuses on the meaning and not the language itself. Learners are encouraged to take risks and are invited to use language in all its varieties for their own purposes (Goodman, 1986). In a whole-language classroom, all of the varied functions of oral language are appropriate and encouraged (Ridley, 1990).

Goodman (1989) claims that whole language is an approach that places great emphasis on reading and the process of constructed meaning. Harp (1988) states that reading is viewed as a process rather than an accumulation of small skills. In whole-language

classrooms, children are asked to respond first to the largest units of meaning, whole selections of meaning, and then when the child has understanding, to respond to smaller pieces such as paragraphs, sentences, words, and letter-sound relationships.

Whole-language instruction is the trend of the future, and educators believe that it is a better approach. York College Professor Anthony Fredricks (1989) claims that the current emphasis on the reading curriculum is the whole-language process. Its emphasis is on the meaningfulness and functionality of reading.

Reading is a subject that can be very difficult for the Drop-Out Prevention student (Herndon, 1990). Traditionally, it has been taught from a part-to-whole method. Beginning with learning the sounds of the alphabet, long and short vowels, consonant clusters, and phoneme and grapheme correspondences, students gradually begin to phonetically decode words. The purpose of instruction is to teach language for its own sake, not for meaning.

Many school systems employ the use of this basal reading instruction; however, the whole-language philosophy opposes its use. Many educators feel that the basal instruction is the root to America's reading problems (Goodman, 1989). No one has been able to prove that children learn best from part to whole as some basals suggest (Fuhler, 1990). Although many students adapt to this type

of instruction, the Drop-Out Prevention student does not. This often perpetrates frustration and failure for these students.

During the 1980's in North America there was an explosion of interest in the whole-language instruction. Administrators and teachers across the country began to ask about it. Basal reader publishers began to revise their products and market them as language-integrated systems. Holt and Rinehart have recently released their whole-language basal reader entitled Impressions (Mosenthal, 1989).

Many educators believe that because the whole-language approach integrates listening, speaking, and writing, that reading skills of students will improve. Altwerger (1987) reported a study done on two grade one classrooms. Fifty-two students participated in a program that was consistent with the whole-language theory. After several months, there was a significant improvement in the students' reading comprehension and vocabulary skills as shown by teacher-made tests.

There are many theorists who suggest that adapting the philosophy of the whole-language approach is a sound practice. Theorists such as Dewey, Holdoway, and Piaget suggest that the development of literacy is fostered when children use manipulatives and interact with peers and adults. A whole-language classroom does

just this by providing the students with reading and writing centers and allowing students to work and read with partners or in groups.

In agreement with these theorists, Smith (1984) claims that to learn to read, children need to read. In addition, Brophy (1986) suggests that gain in reading achievement is associated with a higher percentage of time allocated for reading.

The Drop-Out Prevention student usually performs poorly on standardized testing. Although the philosophy of whole language opposes standardized testing, many school systems require its use. Fortunately, there is evidence that shows by using the whole-language approach, standardized test scores will improve. In a study done in Brownsville, Texas, the results revealed that students who received whole-language instruction reported a percentile increase over the previous year of 14.0 in reading (Rosner, 1990). The students who did not receive whole-language instruction reported only a 3.0 percentile increase over the previous year.

These findings are clearly in agreement with Jones (1989) who found that reading instruction taught through whole-language instruction had a higher probability of producing higher comprehension levels than do lessons not taught through whole language.

Another advantage of whole language is that it can be implemented in all grade levels. A middle-school teacher wrote that

the use of whole language in the classroom encouraged students to enjoy learning from reading and writing (McWhirter, 1990). Furthermore, McWhirter is teaching reading and study skills through whole-language instruction at Arizona State University.

A third advantage to whole-language instruction is the ease in which one can integrate critical thinking skills. Critical thinking involves the ability to reach sound conclusions based on observation and information. Critical thinkers distinguish their observations from their conclusions. They look beyond the facts to see what those facts imply, and they know what the concepts they use imply. Critical thinking involves drawing conclusions, making guesses and inferences, and evaluating. Critical thinking skills help students to think for themselves.

There are several models of critical thinking skills. The University of California Writing Project and Richard Paul's Critical Thinking Approach are models based on Blooms' Taxonomy of Thinking Levels. They both include strategies and skills from all of Blooms' Domains. Another model is the CORT (Cognitive Research Trust). It is a 60-lesson set of materials which teaches two distinct aspects of perspective (de Bono, 1984). Yet another model of critical thinking is called Synetics. It is a creative problem solving process that carries participants from the analysis of problems to the generation and development of new ideas (Weaver, 1990). For the

purpose of this practicum, the author has chosen to integrate Richard Paul's Critical Thinking Approach into the 13-week implementation plan.

Richard Paul's (1985) approach to critical thinking teaches children to become responsible for their own thinking as soon and as completely as possible. It teaches children how to take command of thinking as well as to notice and think about their own thinking. They are taught to be mindful and directive in their thinking. Children are encouraged to probe and to take command of their own mental processes. The intent is for the child to gain mental self-control and to become more honest and fair with themselves and others.

These objectives are easily taught by following Paul's (1985) lesson plan remodeling suggestives. He uses three types of strategies, each of which highlight an aspect of critical thinking. The first type of strategy is the Affective Strategy. It promotes autonomy, empathy, and an understanding of obstacles to critical thinking. The second strategy is Cognitive-Macro-Abilities. It emphasizes the extended exploration of ideas, perspectives, and basic issues. The third strategy is Cognitive-Micro-Skills. These usually highlight a specific, brief critical thought.

The approach is very practical and is easily adaptable to any grade level. Paul has published a series of Critical Thinking Handbooks, which address all grade levels.

The research and discussion completed by the author of this practicum determined that the use of whole-language instruction in the area of reading can be extremely effective in improving reading comprehension and vocabulary retention. The author also based this decision on information supplied by a teacher of Drop-Out Prevention students (Pollifrone, 1990).

1. The Drop-Out Prevention student often has difficulty in learning and studying, particularly in areas which require word retention. Whole language provides experience to improve vocabulary recall through the use of charts, labeling, and language-for-meaning stories.
2. These students are often kinesthetic/tactile learners. Whole language allows for many hands-on activities.
3. These students show a need for mobility in the classroom. The whole-language classroom offers centers throughout the room and students are permitted to visit the centers as they desire.
4. Drop-Out Prevention students need a structured but informal learning environment. The whole-language approach allows students to create their own stories, poems, and lyrics through teacher-guided activities.

5. These students often learn best from their peers. Working in groups or with partners is a technique used in the whole-language approach.

Through research, discussions with professionals, and classroom observations, the practicum author decided to increase the reading skills of the students in the target group through whole-language instruction.

In a week-by-week implementation, a skilled teacher introduces whole-language activities. Students were involved in reading, writing, and oral language in a non-traditional sense. By keeping language whole and involving children in using it functionally and purposefully, children learned to meet their own need to communicate (Goodman, 1986).

The strategies the practicum author utilized are from the book What's Whole in Whole Language by Ken Goodman. The book is centered on the philosophy of whole language and it offered ideas which were used for implementing this whole-language program.

The 19 children took part in the activities on a weekly and daily basis. They were instructed in a regular classroom setting. Some of the activities were completed on a day-to-day basis. Most activities were ongoing throughout the entire 13 weeks. The program was developed so that the activities built upon one another.

Additional costs for providing the use of whole-language instruction were minimal. Students brought in their own books, magazines, and newspapers. All other materials were standard classroom materials provided by the school budget.

The reading curriculum for the nineties must take into consideration that the whole-language approach to reading instruction could be the answer to our nation's reading problems. Sixteen percent of the people who apply for enlistment in the armed forces might not qualify for certain kinds of training because they cannot handle the literacy (Goodman, 1989). This clearly indicates a problem with our nation's reading curriculum. It must provide alternative strategies which address the reading problems of the past. And finally, its goal must be to make lifelong readers out of students (Fredricks, 1989).

CHAPTER III

Method

The implementation of this plan actively involves the practicum author, the teacher, and the students. In addition to any supplemental reading done by the students, each week the students were required to read five short stories or one book. The weekly whole-language activities introduced by the teacher were centered around the readings done by the students. After each activity was been introduced, it continued to be practiced throughout the 13 weeks. Students worked at the centers individually, with partners, or in groups. Students worked on whole-language activities for at least one hour per day. The practicum author and the teacher met for a conference each week to discuss the progress of the practicum as well as the activities for the following week.

For the purpose of this practicum, the implementation plan is discussed week by week in narrative form. A condensed version of this implementation is also included in Appendix J:61.

Week 1

The writer conducted a meeting with the Drop-Out Prevention teacher to discuss the implementation plan. Students, teachers, and the practicum author began to set up the classroom. They worked

together to create a whole-language environment. They set up reading, writing, listening, and content area centers. They made and posted rules, charts, signs, and labels throughout the room. Students began to visit centers.

Week 2

Students began a book reading contest. Students received a star by their name for each book that they had checked out of the school or class library. (A class chart was posted in the classroom.) Each time a student completed a book, the student earned the right to present an oral book report to the class.

Week 3

All students were required to read an assigned story. Teacher administered the first teacher-made comprehension and vocabulary test to the students (Appendix I:53).

The teacher began reading aloud to the students on a daily basis. Teacher read to the whole class in groups and individually. Students brought books or magazines from home for the teacher to read as well as the teacher choosing a book. Class and individuals had story-related discussions.

Week 4

Students began to participate in oral reading with partners or in groups. Students were encouraged to rotate their partners and groups.

Teacher initiated group discussions about readings with the students.

Week 5

Students were allowed 15 minutes each day for silent reading time. They read the literature of their choice.

Week 6

Teacher introduced class mailbox. Students were encouraged to write letters to teachers, administrators, or each other. Mail was distributed each day. All students were required to read an assigned story. Teacher administered the second teacher-made comprehension and vocabulary test (Appendix I:53).

Week 7

Students began dictation activities with partners. Both students read a book and then took turns dictating the story to the other student.

Week 8

Students made large-sized class charts using the dictated stories from the previous week. Charts were read aloud to the class. The charts were also hung up in the room.

Teacher introduced journal writing. Students began making entries into their journals on a daily basis. Teacher read each child's entry and responded. Students were encouraged to write about interests, feelings, questions, etc.

Week 9

Students made group books. Students designed a book about an existing story or made up their own story. Books were displayed in the class library. All students were required to read an assigned book. Teacher administered the third teacher-made comprehension and vocabulary test (Appendix I:53).

Week 10

Students tape recorded each other reading aloud. They played back to a partner or in groups. They concentrated on improving voice quality, inflection, and tone.

Students began visiting the kindergarten room to read orally or to tell stories in small groups. Students made their own visuals to go along with the stories (posters, puppets, story cards, etc.).

Students were introduced to the Writing Assistant computer program. Students practiced writing their vocabulary words on the computer.

Week 11

Students wrote their own skits. They made up a skit or used an idea from an existing story. Students worked with partners or in groups to practice skits. Some students made visuals, props, and costumes. Students completed a book reading contest. All students were rewarded with a class party.

Week 12

Students performed and videotaped the skits. Skits were played back on television for entire class to observe.

All students were required to read an assigned book. Teacher administered the fourth comprehension and vocabulary retention test (Appendix I:53).

While working with a partner at the computer, students wrote a story about a selected topic. Story was edited, printed, and copies were made for all other students. Each student made a class book of stories.

Week 13

Practicum author administered the Reading Inventory Posttest (Appendix H:49) and the Reading Attitude Survey Posttest

(Appendix B:34). Results were recorded and analyzed by the writer of this practicum. Progress was charted and analyzed.

The writer recorded and averaged the students' scores from the four teacher-made comprehension and vocabulary retention tests.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The evaluation process took place over the entire 13-week period. This was necessary to assess the effectiveness of the solution strategies and the implementation of this practicum.

In efforts to measure the students' improvement on reading comprehension and vocabulary retention skills, the practicum author administered a posttest. The Burns & Rowe Informal Reading Inventory Test B was used (Appendix H:49). The practicum author recorded the results. The results were then compared with the pretest. The pretest scores stated that in the target group, 20 percent of the fifth grade students scored satisfactorily (70 percent or above) in reading comprehension and vocabulary retention on the Burns & Rowe Informal Reading Inventory. The scores ranged from 10 percent to 75 percent, with a mean of 30 percent. The posttest scores revealed that in the target group, 40 percent of the fifth grade students scored satisfactorily. The scores ranged from 13 percent to 80 percent, with a mean of 40 percent.

There was an additional 20 percent of the students who scored 70 percent or above on the Burns & Rowe Informal Reading Inventory (Appendix E:42). Although, the original objectives were not met, there was improvement.

In efforts to measure students improvement on attitudes towards reading, the practicum author administered a post-survey using the McKenna Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. The practicum author recorded the results. The results were then compared with the pre-survey. The pre-survey scores stated that in the target group, 15 percent of the fifth grade students reported having positive attitudes (70 percent or above) towards reading. The scores ranged from zero percent to 70 percent, with a mean of 30 percent. The post-survey scores revealed that in the target group, 80 percent of the students reported having positive attitudes. The scores ranged from 65 percent to 80 percent, with a mean of 75 percent. There was an additional 60 percent of the students who reported having positive attitudes by scoring 70 percent or above on the McKenna Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix F:45).

Although the original objective was not met, there was a significant improvement in students' attitudes towards reading.

In efforts to measure an improvement in students' academic grades, the teacher administered to the students a series of four teacher-made tests. The grades were averaged and recorded. The practicum author compared the grades with those of the 1989-90 school year. The 1989-90 academic grades stated that in the target group, 20 percent of the fifth grade students scored satisfactorily (70 percent or above). The grades ranged from 30 percent to 70

percent, with a mean of 50 percent. The averaged scores of the four teacher-made tests revealed that 47 percent of the fifth grade students scored satisfactorily. The scores ranged from 30 percent to 80 percent with a mean of 60 percent. There was an additional 27 percent of the students who scored satisfactorily on academic grades in reading (Appendix E:43).

Although the original objective was not met, there was an acceptable improvement in students' academic grades.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

The writer feels confident that the use of the whole-language approach will increase reading skills. The writer intends to expose other teachers in the school to the philosophy and methods of using the whole-language approach. This will be done by a weekly distribution of literature. The practicum author will also suggest that teachers attend the workshops on the subject of whole language which are being offered by the area reading specialist.

Due to the increasing popularity of the whole-language concept, it is the writer's belief that this practicum will be of interest to other area educators. It will be made available to the area reading specialist as well as educators in other schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

BURNS AND ROWE INFORMAL READING INVENTORY PRETEST

APPENDIX A

BURNS AND ROWE INFORMAL READING INVENTORY PRETEST

Reading Comprehension Test

MOTIVATIONAL STATEMENT: Read this story to find out about a harbor seal pup that has a special problem.

In the sea, a harbor seal pup learns to catch and eat fish by watching its mother. By the time it is weaned, at the age of four or five weeks, it is able to feed on its own.

Without a mother, and living temporarily in captivity, Pearson had to be taught what a fish was and how to swallow it. Eventually, he would have to learn to catch one himself.

Holly started his training with a small herring--an oily fish which is a favorite with seals. Gently, she opened his mouth and slipped the fish in headfirst. Harbor seals have sharp teeth for catching fish but no teeth for grinding and chewing. They swallow their food whole.

But Pearson didn't seem to understand what he was supposed to do. He bit down on the fish and then spit it out. Holly tried again. This time, Pearson got the idea. He swallowed the herring in one gulp and looked eagerly for more.

Within a week, he was being hand-fed a pound of fish a day in addition to his formula. This new diet made him friskier than ever. He chased the other pups in the outside pen. He plunged into the small wading pool and rolled in the shallow water, splashing both seals and people.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| _____ Main Idea | 1. What is this story about? (teaching a harbor seal pup to catch and eat fish; teaching Pearson to catch and eat fish) |
| _____ Detail | 2. How does a harbor seal pup learn to catch and eat fish in the sea? (by watching its mother) |
| _____ Vocabulary | 3. What does the word "temporarily" mean? (for a short time; not permanently) |
| _____ Vocabulary | 4. What does the word "captivity" mean? (the condition of being held as a prisoner or captive; confinement; a condition in which a person or animal is not free) |
| _____ Cause and Effect/
Inference | 5. What caused Pearson to need to be taught what a fish was and how to swallow it? (He didn't have a mother to show him.) |
| _____ Inference | 6. What is an oily fish that seals like? (herring) |
| _____ Cause and Effect/
Inference | 7. What causes harbor seals to swallow their food whole? (They have no teeth for grinding and chewing.) |
| _____ Sequence | 8. Name in order the two things that Pearson did the first time Holly put a fish in his mouth. (bit down on the fish and then spit it out) |
| _____ Inference | 9. How fast did Pearson learn how to eat a fish? (He learned on the second try.) |
| _____ Detail | 10. What made Pearson get friskier? (his new diet of fish and formula; his new diet) |

Vocabulary Test

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. base | 11. hitched |
| 2. border | 12. ignore |
| 3. bore | 13. impulse |
| 4. detour | 14. lacked |
| 5. dismay | 15. marvel |
| 6. establish | 16. rude |
| 7. exhausted | 17. thicket |
| 8. gallant | 18. transaction |
| 9. glimpse | 19. transparent |
| 10. haunt | 20. turban |

APPENDIX B

MCKENNA ELEMENTARY ATTITUDE SURVEY
PRETEST AND POSTTEST

APPENDIX B

MCKENNA ELEMENTARY ATTITUDE SURVEY
PRETEST AND POSTTEST

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?				
2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?				
3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?				
4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?				

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5	How do you feel about spending free time reading?				
6	How do you feel about starting a new book?				
7	How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?				
8	How do you feel about reading instead of playing?				

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9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?



10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?



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APPENDIX C
LETTERS OF PERMISSION

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October 18, 1990

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*requested over
telephone*

Burns/Roe. INFORMAL READING INVENTORY

test A, p. 84

test B, p. 105



GEORGIA
SOUTHERN

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

40

October 19, 1990

Mary Stasko
25 Crossings Circle, Unit E
Boynton Beach, FL 33435

Dear Ms. Stasko:

Thank you for your call regarding the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, based on Garfield. As I indicated, you have complete permission to duplicate the survey for your needs. I wish you luck with your project and would appreciate information on its outcome.

Sincerely,

Michael C. McKenna
Professor of Education

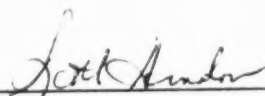
MM/ja

APPENDIX D
PROBLEM CONFIRMATION LETTER

APPENDIX D
PROBLEM CONFIRMATION LETTER

To Whom It May Concern:

As instructor of fifth grade Drop-Out Prevention students, I confirm the need for an alternative reading program. The students are experiencing difficulty with reading comprehension and vocabulary development. The students are performing below average academically. Most of the students have a low interest in the area of reading.



APPENDIX E
BURNS AND ROWE INFORMAL READING INVENTORY
PRETEST SCORES

APPENDIX E
BURNS AND ROWE INFORMAL READING INVENTORY
PRETEST SCORES

=====			
Group	Range	Mean	% Scoring 70% or Above
Target Group	10%-75%	30%	20%
Comparison Group	50%-100%	85%	80%

POSTTEST SCORES

=====				
Group	Range	Mean	% Scores 70% or More	% of Increase
Target Group	13%-80%	40%	40%	20%

APPENDIX F
MCKENNA ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY
PRETEST SCORES

APPENDIX F
MCKENNA ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY
PRETEST SCORES

=====			
Group	Range	Mean	% Scoring 70% or Above
Target Group	0%-70%	30%	15%
Comp.Group	40%-100%	90%	90%

POSTTEST SCORES

=====				
Group	Range	Mean	% Scores 70% or More	% of Increase
Target Group	65%-80%	75%	80%	60%

APPENDIX G
ACADEMIC SCORES 1989-1990
AND
TEACHER-MADE TESTS

APPENDIX G
ACADEMIC SCORES 1989-1990

=====

Group	Range	Mean	% Scoring 70% or Above
Target Group	30%-70%	50%	20%
Comparison Group	60%-100%	80%	80%

TEACHER-MADE TESTS

=====

Group	Range	Mean	% Scores 70% or More	% of Increase
Target Group	30%-85%	60%	47%	27%

APPENDIX H

BURNS AND ROWE INFORMAL READING INVENTORY POSTTEST

APPENDIX H

BURNS AND ROWE INFORMAL READING INVENTORY POSTTEST

Reading Comprehension Test

MOTIVATIONAL STATEMENT: Read this story to find out about one activity that is common in New Zealand.

New Zealand has a mild and rainy climate. This makes it a good place for sheep ranching. Even the steep sides of the mountains are used. Here, sure-footed sheep can graze where farm machinery cannot go.

New Zealand has about eighteen times as many sheep as it has people. The sheep are raised on large ranches called stations. During the summer, the sheep feed on the lush grass in the mountains. In late fall, they must be rounded up, or mustered. Then they are herded down to spend the winter months on the warmer lower slopes.

On a large station, thousands of sheep may be scattered over many mountain acres. The musters cannot use horses on the steep mountainsides. With the help of well-trained dogs, they herd the flock, or mob, on foot.

The real work, however, begins in spring. Once again, the sheep are mustered. This time the mobs are herded down from the lower slopes to fenced-in pens. The lambs to be fattened for meat are separated from the others. The remaining thousands are moved into sheds where their thick wool is clipped, or sheared. This job is done by workers called shearers.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| _____ Main Idea | 1. What is the purpose of this story?
(to tell what sheep ranching in New Zealand is like) |
| _____ Detail | 2. What kind of climate does New Zealand have? (mild and rainy) |
| _____ Vocabulary | 3. What does the word "stations" mean in this article? (large ranches where sheep are raised) |
| _____ Vocabulary | 4. What does the word "mustered" mean in this article? (rounded up) |
| _____ Inference | 5. What is the temperature like high in the mountains? (It is cooler than it is on the lower slopes.) |
| _____ Cause and Effect/
Inference | 6. What causes the workers to muster the sheep on foot? (Horses can't keep their footing on the steep mountainsides.) |
| _____ Detail | 7. What kind of help do the musterers have in herding the sheep? (well-trained dogs; dogs) |
| _____ Vocabulary | 8. What is a flock of sheep sometimes called? (a mob) |
| _____ Sequence | 9. Name, in order, three things that happen when the sheep are mustered in the spring. (They are herded into pens; then lambs to be fattened for meat are separated from the others; the others are moved into sheds; then they are sheared.) [Accept any three of the four items as long as they are in order.] |
| _____ Detail | 10. Who clips the sheep's thick wool? (workers called shearers; shearers) |

Vocabulary Test

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. astonish | 11. hazel |
| 2. contract | 12. impress |
| 3. depressed | 13. indication |
| 4. deprived | 14. massive |
| 5. eagerly | 15. platform |
| 6. evaporate | 16. pledge |
| 7. fashion | 17. poaching |
| 8. frantic | 18. skirt |
| 9. frontier | 19. starvation |
| 10. furnish | 20. summit |

APPENDIX I
TEACHER-MADE TESTS

APPENDIX I
TEACHER-MADE TESTS

Reading Test Name _____

Comprehension: Answer each question.

1. In the story called "The Medal," who are the two main characters? _____
Describe them: _____
2. What did Al's teacher give him for being the best at fire building? _____
3. Why was the medal important to Al? _____

4. How does Sarah hurt Al's feelings? _____

5. Do Sarah and Al become friends again? _____ Explain: _____

Critical Thinking: Answer each question.

1. Why do you think Al accepted Sarah's apology? _____

2. Do you think Sarah should have apologized? _____ Why or why not?

Vocabulary: In your own words define each word. Using each word, write a sentence relating to a personal experience.

hospital

Definition _____

Sentence _____

experience

Definition _____

Sentence _____

chocolate

Definition _____

Sentence _____

Reading Test

Name _____

Comprehension: Answer each question.

1. In the story "The Tuesday Elephant," Kwani befriends a wild elephant. How does this happen? _____

2. Kwani had a brother, what was his name? _____ Did he know about Kwani's friendship with the elephant? _____
3. What was Kwani worried about in this story? _____

4. How many elephants were captured? Why? _____

5. When are Kwani and his friend separated? _____
Do they see each other again? _____

Critical Thinking: Answer each question.

1. Do you think it is possible for Kwani's friendship to really exist? _____
2. Do you think the elephant could recognize Kwani after being separated for a long time? _____

Vocabulary: Match each word with its definition. Write the letter on the line.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| _____ 1. swear | a. another name for a scarf |
| _____ 2. gazelle | b. an antelope that lives in Africa |
| _____ 3. shallow | c. the opposite of deep |
| _____ 4. kerchief | d. a small pile |
| _____ 5. mound | e. a reptile found in swampy areas |
| _____ 6. crocodile | f. to make a solemn promise |

Reading Test Name _____

Comprehension: Answer each question.

1. What did the court jesters wear in the story "From Jesters to Joeys"? _____
2. How many main types of clowns are there? _____ Name each type.

3. Joeys have a special characteristic. What is it? _____

4. Is a clown's make-up important? _____ Why or why not? _____

5. What is the Clown Alley? _____

Critical Thinking: Answer each question.

1. Why would it be fun to be a clown? _____
Why not? _____
2. Would it be difficult for you to make people laugh? _____
Why or why not? _____

Vocabulary: Answer each question using a vocabulary.

1. What is a word for something that is very ugly? _____
2. What do you call people who were Court entertainers in the Middle Ages? _____
3. What is the opposite of "ancient" times? _____

Reading Test

Name _____

Comprehension: Answer each question.

1. Who is the main character? _____ What is causing her to have a problem? _____

 2. What is done to improve the situation? _____

 3. How did Angela discover that something was wrong? _____

 4. How did Angela feel about the solution? _____

 5. What happened as a result of this solution? _____

- Was Angela surprised? _____

Critical Thinking: Answer each question.

1. What did Angela's teacher do to help Angela and the class to be more comfortable with the new situation? _____

2. If the teacher had not talked about what happened, do you think there may have been problems for Angela? _____

Vocabulary: Write the meaning to each word using your own words.

Write a sentence about yourself using each word.

mutter

Definition _____

Sentence _____

ear canal

Definition _____

Sentence _____

headphones

Definition _____

Sentence _____

APPENDIX J
TIMELINE

APPENDIX J

TIMELINE

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY WEEK												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Writer met with teacher. Set-up of classroom began.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Students began book reading contest.		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Students were required to read an assigned story. Students took first teacher-made test. Teacher reads aloud to students.			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Students read aloud with partners or in groups.				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Students began silent reading time in class.					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Teacher introduced class mailbox. Students were required to read assigned story. Students took second teacher-made test.						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Students began dictation activities.							X	X	X	X	X	X	X

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY WEEK												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Students made class story charts. Teacher introduced journal writing. Students began making entries.								X	X	X	X	X	X
Students made group books. Students were required to read assigned story. Students took third teacher-made test.									X	X	X	X	X
Students tape recorded each other reading aloud. Students began visiting kindergarten room to read orally or tell stories.										X	X	X	X
Students wrote their own skits.											X	X	X
Students performed and videotaped skits. Students were required to read assigned story. Students took fourth teacher- made test.												X	X
Practicum author administered reading inventory posttest, reading attitude survey posttest, and author recorded and averaged student scores from all four teacher-made tests.													X